

MR. AARON H. CABELL.

A Leader in *The Commercial Arena of Western Kentucky*—*Splendid Results From a Small Beginning*—*Sound Principles his Ladder.*

The accompanying portrait is a splendid likeness of Mr. Aaron H. Cabell, the race's oldest, leading and most successful merchant and real estate dealer of Henderson, Ky. He is a dealer in staple and fancy groceries at No. 140 Holloway street in that city.

The subject of this sketch was born on the farm of Mr. John B. Cabell, this county, March 4th, 1855. Having been born in that dark period of the race's history preceding the emancipation, his educational advantages were very meagre, but he made good use of the opportunities offered him, and succeeded in acquiring an ordinary education.

In his early life Mr. Cabell was ambitious to become a business man and to enter commercial life. In harmony with that desire he and two older brothers, bought the stock of Mr. D. D. Williams, June 10th, 1874, for \$200.00, the terms of the sale being \$100.00 cash, and the balance payable six months from date. The three brothers conducted the business for three years, at the end of which time Mr. A. H. Cabell, bought the interest of his brothers and became the sole proprietor.

On the first day of March, 1877, he bought the property in which the business is conducted, paying cash for same. In this short time his business had increased to such an extent that he was compelled to tear down the original building, a very small one and erect the present large and substantial one, which he has occupied nearly twenty-five years.

Shortly after beginning his business career he found it necessary to have some knowledge of book-keeping, and succeeded in making arrangements with Mr. Phil. T. Allen, for instruction in the same. Three nights in every week for many months he visited the office of Mr. Allen, for instruction in that science and commercial law.

Mr. Cabell has, by close application to business, fair dealing, working hard, early and late, built up a first class and paying business, and made himself one of Kentucky's most valuable and substantial citizens.

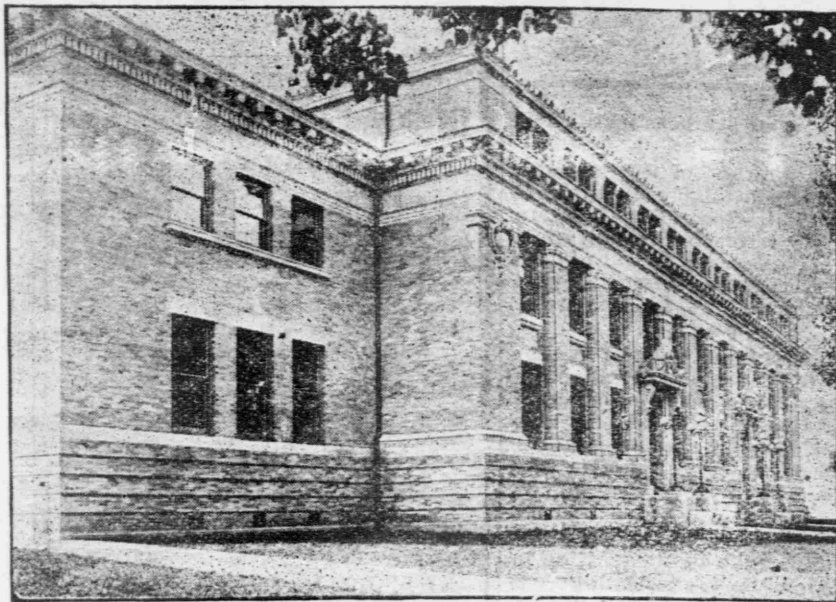
Besides the property in which the business is conducted, he is the owner of a magnificent residence, 118 Alvasia street, and several other pieces of real estate, which he rents at good figures.

One of the most remarkable features in the business life of this worthy man is that he has accomplished all this without borrowing a penny of the banks, or other money lending associations.

Mr. Cabell has had some experience as a politician. In 1881 he made the race for the common Council, from the third ward, against ex-Postmaster R. E. Cook, and was defeated by only 20 votes, and in 1888 he was elected as an alternate from the second Congressional district of Kentucky, to the National Convention at Chicago, which nominated the Hon. Benjamin Harrison for the presidency.

He concluded many years ago, there was not much "pie" in politics for the Negro just now. Mr. Cabell takes a great interest in the religious, educational and financial affairs of the race, and believes that when the race becomes more independent, and noted for its thrift, education and chastity, and wealth, and bearing equally with other races the burdens of the government, it will enjoy equal protection and benefits, and we can hasten or retard these things in proportion as we properly or improperly conduct ourselves.

He was for several years clerk and trustee of the first church here, and is an active member of Hector Lodge, K. of P. of which he has been Master of the Exchequer for fourteen years. In 1882 he moved to Bloomington, Ill., where he conducted a grocery



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Washington, D. C.

business for two years, but not meeting with the success he desired. He returned to Henderson, Ky., where he has since lived and conducted a flourishing business. Mr. Cabell is properly a self-made man, and since he has accomplished all this under disadvantageous conditions, it is to be expected that the Negro of the present generation, blessed with superior opportunities, should accomplish much more.

The heights of great men, reached and kept,
were not attained by sudden flight.
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.

Cole and Johnson.

Continued from first page.

son, though, is the educated musician of the firm, and his work is thoroughly musicianly.

Both are men of pronounced talent and culture. Mr. Johnson is a graduate of a Boston Conservatory of Music, and carries a musical degree. He is a native of Florida, and is familiar by personal contact with the traditions and themes of melodies distinctively racial.

Mr. Cole is one of the star colored comedians of the stage, taking rank easily with the best impersonators and humorists of "the more favored race." His style, though original in bearing and execution, is slightly reminiscent of and fully equal to the effervescent methods of the late William Hoey, (Odd Hoss), who vied with Cole in giving to the stage the eccentric "hobo" or tramp. Johnson's humor is delicate, and wins by suggestion, while Cole's plaudits are earned by broader effects and "straight comedy." They are adepts in the construction of a wide range of melodies, and most of the music sung by them and much of the catchy "ragtime" of the last few years bears the stamp, "As arranged and sung by Cole and Johnson." The major portion of their spare time is spent on new compositions, and during their travels they generally seek a quiet place where there is a piano, thus affording an opportunity for conceiving and "trying out" the fresh products of their brains. They describe their triumphs as the result of "Hard Study, close application, some talent, some ability, some sacrifice, some luck, and some common sense."

Their primary ambition is to develop a distinct school of music from the primitive melodies of our race, and to do for Negro music in this country what Coleridge Taylor is doing for it in England.

They talk about their ambitions freely, but very modestly, very sensibly, yet with the appreciation of their own capacities, which is essential to all successful work. If a man doesn't believe in himself he had better give up the fight.

"What we aim to do," said Mr. Cole to a representative of The Color-

ed American, "is to evolve a type of music that will have all that is distinct in the old Negro music and yet which shall be sophisticated enough to appeal to the cultured musician. We want the Negro spirit—its warmth and its originality—to color our music; we are trying to get away from the minor strain that used to dominate it. I think the Negro music of the future will be something akin to the Spanish, but not so vigorous. Something of a more languid nature.

"I don't agree with you there, Bob," broke in Mr. Johnson. "I don't think it will resemble Spanish at all. It will be individual and characteristic."

"What I meant," replied Mr. Cole, "is that it would be as distinctly rhythmic as Spanish music is, so that no matter where you hear it you will recognize it at once as Negro music."

"We have done something for Klaw & Erlanger's 'Bluebeard,' which will explain our theory. We call it the 'Evolution of the Negro Song' and its idea is to take a simple melody—a regular jungle song, with its boom boom accompaniment like the pounding of log drums—and trace it up through all the stages of the Negro development as shown in his music."

"It will be psychological as well as musical then?"

"Yes, that's the idea. We will treat this theme in all the ways Negro music has known—in the Jim Crow style, the Stephen Foster manner, the march song and so on until it reaches the cake-walk period with all its exuberance. Beginning plaintively it will grow brighter and brighter as the condition of the colored man brightened until it becomes the joyous thing we have now.

"This is really written as an orchestral suite, but it will be sung in 'Bluebeard' by a chorus of one hundred and fifty voices. Then we shall issue it in its original instrumental form."

"A polite entertainment is our aim," continued Mr. Cole. "The public wants fun, but it comes to them much more pleasantly when presented in the most polite and artistic manner."

Cole & Johnson are conceded to be the most successful song writers of the day. There is not a single Broadway piece for the past year or so, with the exception of Weber & Fields, which has not had from one to a half dozen of their songs, and the greatest hit of "Sally in Our Alley" is "Under the Bamboo Tree" as sung by Marie Cahill.

Messrs. Cole and Johnson are gentlemen of excellent antecedents, and move in the best of society. Everywhere they are handsomely entertained by enthusiastic admirers, who are anxious to thus express their appreciation of men who are performing such a valuable service to the whole race along new and increasingly profitable lines. In holding the mirror up to nature, as it were, Cole and Johnson deservedly take distinguished rank, and when the history of original comedy, musical evolution, and rare dramatic genius is written, their names, will adorn and illumine its grandest pages.

R. W. THOMPSON.

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